

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MAPUTO 1431

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MZ, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES MEDIA ATTACKS ON USG WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER CHISSANO

REF: (A) MAPUTO 1397; (B) MAPUTO 1390; (C) MAPUTO 1116;

(D) MAPUTO A-86

1. SUMMARY: IN PAST COUPLE WEEKS, SEVERAL PARTICULARLY
OFFENSIVE ATTACKS AGAINST USG HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED OR
BROADCAST OVER MOZAMBIQUE MEDIA. THERE WAS ALSO A VICIOUS
ATTACK BY CUBAN AMBASSADOR AT RECENT PUBLIC MEETING
(REFTEL A). IN MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO,
THE AMBASSADOR PROTESTED THESE ATTACKS, EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE
THAT GPRM PERMITTED ITS OWN INFORMATION ORGANS TO DISSEMINATE
THESE ATTACKS, AND POINTED OUT THAT CUBAN AMBASSADOR HAD
GROSSLY VIOLATED DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE BY TAKING ADVANTAGE
HIS POSITION TO ATTACK A GOVERNMENT WITH WHOM GPRM
MAINTAINS FRIENDLY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO
PROMISED DISCUSS MATTER WITH MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OF-
FICIALS.

END SUMMARY

2. DURING MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHISSANO ON DE-
CEMBER 9, I RAISED SUBJECT OF SOME PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE
ATTACKS ON USG THAT HAVE APPEARED IN PRESS OR ON RADIO
IN PAST FEW WEEKS, AS WELL AS AN ATTACK LAUNCHED BY CUBAN
AMBASSADOR AT PUBLIC MEETING ON NOVEMBER 30. AS DEPARTMENT
IS AWARE, MOZAMBIQUE MEDIA'S COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY ON USG
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SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN DECIDELY UNFRIENDLY, WITH

PENCHANT FOR HIGHLIGHTING NEGATIVE NEWS STORIES, FOR RE-PRINTING ANTI-U.S. ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS FROM PRENSA LATINA, TASS, NOVOSTI, NCNA AND EAST GERMAN PRESS, AND FOR IMPUTING THE ILLS OF THE WORLD TO "IMPERIALIST, CAPITALISTS AND NEO-COLONIALIST," OF WHICH USG, OF COURSE, IS PRIME EXAMPLE. LOCAL DIPLOMATS, WHO READ PRESS CLOSELY, THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN A SLIGHT LET-UP DURING HEIGHT OF SECRETARY'S INITIATIVES ON RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA; EMBASSY THOUGHT SO TOO. N LAST MONTH. HOWEVER, THE LOCAL MEDIA HAS REVERTED TO FORM. THE ATTACKS OF LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS PROMPTED ME TO RAISE MATTER WITH CHISSANO.

3. I CITED THREE EXAMPLES:

A. A CARTOON WHICH APPREARED IN NOVEMBER 28 ISSUE OF THE WEEKLY JOURNAL TEMPO, WHICH DEPICTED SECRETARY KISSINGER CONSORTING AND PLOTTING WITH IAN SMITH AND PRIME MINISTER VORSTER. THE CARICATURES AND LANGUAGE ATTRIBUTED TO SECRETARY WERE INSULTING AND DEMEANING. (TEMPO ISSUE WILL BE POUCHED TO AF/S.)

B. A ZIPA BROADCAST (REPRINTED IN NOTICIAS DA BEIRA NOVEMBER 28, WHICH ACCUSED THE U.S. "OF SECRETLY ARMING THE TERRORISTS" AND CALLED SECRETARY KISSINGER, AMONG OTHER THINGS, AN "ASSASSIN." (REFTEL B)

C. THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR NOVEMBER 30 AT PUBLIC CEREMONY JOINTLY SPONSORED BY FRELIMO AND THE CUBAN EMBASSY, AT WHICH THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR ALLEGED THAT THE USG HAD PLANNED AND PERPETRATED THE OCTOBER CRASH NEAR BARBADOS OF A CUBAN AIRLINER, AND IN WHICH HE SOUGHT TO LINK "YANKEE IMPERIALISM" WITH THE RHODESIAN "MASSACRE" AT THE ZIMBABWEAN REFUGEE CAMP IN NYAZONIA IN AUGUST.

4. I TOLD CHISSANO THAT I FOUND THESE ATTACKS FALSE, MISLEADING, OFFENSIVE AND INSULTING. I SAID THAT I WAS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED THAT IN TWO OF THE CASES, I.E., THE CARTOON IN TEMPO AND THE ZIPA BROADCAST, THE ATTACKS WERE PUBLISHED OR BROADCAST BY OFFICIAL ORGANS OF THE MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT. AS FOR THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR'S CONFIDENTIAL

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SPEECH, I SAID THAT IT WAS A GROSS VIOLATION OF NORMAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE, AND A DISCOURTESY TO THE GPRM, FOR AN ACCREDITED AMBASSADOR TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS POSITION TO ATTACK PUBLICLY A GOVERNMENT WITH WHICH THE HOST GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS FRIENDLY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

5. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT I WAS WELL AWARE THERE WERE BASIC POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES

AND THAT I FULLY APPRECIATED THAT THE GPRM WOULD CONTINUE TO STATE OPENLY AND FORCEFULLY ITS VIEWS ON POLICY, JUST AS THE USG WOULD CONTINUE TO DO. THIS WAS HEALTHY. HOWEVER, I HOPED THAT DUE REGARD WOULD BE SHOWN FOR THE TRUTH AND THAT THE LANGUAGE USED WOULD NOT BE ABUSIVE, INSULTING OF OFFENSIVE, AS UNFORTUNATELY HAD BEEN THE CASE IN THE EXAMPLES I HAD CITED.

6. I LEFT CHISSANO AN AIDE MEMOIRE SUMMARIZING WHAT I HAD SAID. (COPY BEING POUCHED TO AF/S)

7. CHISSANO LISTENED ATTENTIVELY, AT TIMES NODDING AS IF IN AGREEMENT WITH WHAT I WAS SAYING, AND INTERRUPTING AT ONE POINT TO SAY THAT THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS WERE INDEED "TOUGH." CHISSANO SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER FURTHER AND TALK TO THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.

8. COMMENT: WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE IF MY TALK WITH CHISSANO WILL DO ANY GOOD. I DOUBT THAT THERE WILL BE ANY SIGNIFICANT LET-UP IN THE ANTI-AMERICAN BIAS IN THE LOCAL MEDIA'S COVERAGE OR COMMENTARY. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THERE MAY BE SOME MODERATION IN THE LANGUAGE USED, AT LEAST FOR A TIME. (THE PROTEST THE EMBASSY LODGED IN SEPTEMBER WITH RESPECT TO MEDIA CHARGES THAT THE USG WAS ASSISTING THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT IN ITS CLANDESTINE ANTI-FRELIMO BROADCASTS TO MOZAMBIQUE SEEMED TO DO SOME GOOD. AT LEAST SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES ON THE SAME SUBJECT DELETED THE MORE EGREGIOUS ALLEGATIONS. REFTELS C AND D) IN ANY EVENT, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT MY DISCUSSION DOES ANY GOOD, I THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT TO PUT ON THE RECORD OUR DISPEASURE WITH GPRM'S FAILURE TO EXERCISE GREATER CONTROLS OVER ITS OWN MEDIA ORGANS, AS WELL AS OVER THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR.

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